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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000285

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, G/TIP, AND DRL
EMBASSY ABU DHABI FOR AMAGLEBY
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FOR JAMES RUDE

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [ELAB](#) [KMPI](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: OMAN PROPOSES NEW IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES TO
PREVENT TRAFFICKING ACROSS ITS UAE BORDER

REF: A. 07 MUSCAT 206

[1](#)B. 07 MUSCAT 1116

[1](#)C. 07 MUSCAT 298

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) According to diplomats at the Philippine Embassy in Muscat, the government of Oman has agreed to strengthen immigration procedures along its border with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to stop the possible trafficking of housemaids into Oman (refs A & B). Under the new procedures, Royal Oman Police (ROP) Immigration will require Philippine nationals attempting to enter Oman via the UAE for work as housemaids to present a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) signed by the Philippine Embassy in Muscat along with their passport and valid work visa before being allowed to cross the border. The Philippine Labor attache told poloff that Oman's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) outlined the new policy during a private meeting at the MFA, at which representatives of the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and ROP also were present. MFA officials indicated that the ROP plans to quietly implement the new procedures soon, and asked the Philippine Embassy to provide the ROP with an NOC template that its border guards could reference while inspecting work and travel documents.

[1](#)2. (C) The labor attache stated that according to the MFA, the procedures initially would apply only to Philippine nationals. He hoped, however, that other missions of labor-exporting countries would take their own bilateral steps to encourage the MFA to adopt similar controls for their nationals. He further commented that the ROP planned to target Philippine housemaids exclusively, who would be required to present the NOC each time they entered Oman from the UAE, but that the procedures would not apply to Philippine nationals in other job categories or those traveling to Oman as tourists. The attache expressed his concern that Omani sponsors could bypass the NOC requirement by bringing their maids into Oman on tourist visas, but stated that the Philippine Embassy would raise this point with the MFA if it proved to be a problem. He acknowledged that USG support in raising the visibility of the issue likely was critical in Oman's decision to address the cross-border trade in housemaids - an issue that the Philippine Embassy has raised consistently over the past year (ref C).

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: Oman's decision to implement new immigration procedures along its border with the UAE is a positive development, and may represent an effective way to stop a loosely-regulated practice that put women at risk of exploitation and abuse. The Philippine labor attache said, however, that there are elements of the new policy that remain unclear, and the real test of the policy's

effectiveness in stopping potential trafficking cases will be in how stringently the ROP implements it. The Embassy will continue to work closely with the Philippine Embassy and the missions of other source labor countries to monitor implementation and encourage additional Omani action to combat TIP. End Comment.

GRAPPO